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# DPI VISTA Monthly

December 2005



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*Words without action  
are the assassins of  
idealism.  
-Herbert Hoover*

## VISTAs:

Another year has come to pass and we hope that you are pleased with all the work you have accomplished this year. Many of you may have never expected to be here, but we hope you are happy to be so. Thank you for all your hard work so far, and have a happy holiday.

**Recommended:** Special Olympics Get Into It (SO Get Into It™) is a free service-learning curriculum that celebrates the diverse gifts of every student whatever his or her ability.

[http://www.specialolympics.org/Special+Olympics+Public+Website/English/Initiatives/Schools and Youth/SO+Get+Into+It.htm](http://www.specialolympics.org/Special+Olympics+Public+Website/English/Initiatives/Schools+and+Youth/SO+Get+Into+It.htm)



## Sites to See:

[www.uwex.edu/ces/cty/oconto-](http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cty/oconto/) This site has great parenting information!

Thefrugalshopper.com- has some good ideas for inexpensive gifts!

Thriftyfun.com- Filled with info and links to other budget sites

[http://www.schoolexpress.com/awards/award\\_step1.php](http://www.schoolexpress.com/awards/award_step1.php) - A website where you can make awards and certificates

[www.hasbro.org/pl/page.grantmaking/dn/ct/default.cfm](http://www.hasbro.org/pl/page.grantmaking/dn/ct/default.cfm) - Hasbro's grant giving branch

[www.sedl.org/learning/index.cgi?command=s\\_howcatalog&course=connections-](http://www.sedl.org/learning/index.cgi?command=s_howcatalog&course=connections) Modules for school partnerships

## Books to Read:

\**Corner: A Year in the Life of an Inner-City Neighborhood* by David Simon and Edward Burns

\**Hunger: An Unnatural History* by Sharman Apt Russell

\**Banker to the Poor: Micro-Lending and the Battle against World Poverty* by Muhammad Yunus

## *Opportunity Knockin'*

### "Fellowships for Hands-on Science Learning"

Earthwatch Institute offers educators fully-funded fellowships for hands-on learning with leading scientists doing field research and conservation on one of 130 projects around the world. Maximum Award: fully-funded fellowship.

Eligibility: Elementary, middle, and high school educators and administrators of any discipline. Deadline: Applications accepted on a rolling basis. <http://www.earthwatch.org/education/educator/opportunities.html>

### "Funding for Hands-on Environmental Projects"

The Captain Planet Foundation funds hands-on environmental projects for to encourage youth around the world to work individually and collectively to solve environmental problems in their neighborhoods and communities.

Maximum Award: \$2500. Eligibility: Schools and non-profits. Deadline: December 31.

[http://www.captainplanetfdn.org/aboutUs.html#policies\\_grant\\_guidelines](http://www.captainplanetfdn.org/aboutUs.html#policies_grant_guidelines)

### "Digital Imaging & Visual Learning Grants"

Olympus America, Inc. & Tool Factory, Inc. sponsor a classroom grants program designed to strengthen education through digital imaging and the power of visual learning. Maximum Award: \$3,500. Eligibility: K12 and special education schools in the US, its territories, and Canada.

Deadline: December 30, 2006. [http://www.toolfactory.com/olympus\\_contest/olympus\\_teacher.htm](http://www.toolfactory.com/olympus_contest/olympus_teacher.htm)

### "National School and Business Partnerships Award"

The National School and Business Partnerships Award supports and recognizes the efforts of schools and businesses that partner to improve the academic, social or physical well-being of students. Maximum Award: \$10,000. Eligibility: Partnerships involving kindergarten through 12th grade public schools and/or school districts and businesses.

Deadline: January 30, 2006. <http://www.corpschoolpartners.org>

### "Youth Nutrition & Fitness Grant Program"

General Mills Foundation Champions Youth Nutrition and Fitness grant program to encourage communities in the United States to improve the eating and physical activity patterns of young people, ages 2-20. Grants will be awarded to nonprofit organizations and agencies working with communities that demonstrate the greatest need and likelihood of sustainable impact on young people's nutrition and activity levels through innovative programs. Maximum Award: \$10,000. Eligibility: community-based groups. Deadline: February 1, 2006.

<http://www.generalmills.com/corporate/commitment/champions.aspx>

### "Civic Connections Program"

National Council for the Social Studies Civic Connections Program links local history inquiry with community service-learning activities. Teachers will develop and adapt these activities based on their students' interests and abilities, the needs or problems in the local community, and their local social studies curriculum requirements. Maximum Award: \$7500.

Eligibility: teams of three 3rd-12th grade teachers; members of the National Council for the Social Studies (or agree to join if application is accepted) and must partner with at least one local community agency.

Deadline: February 26, 2006.

<http://www.civiconnections.org/>

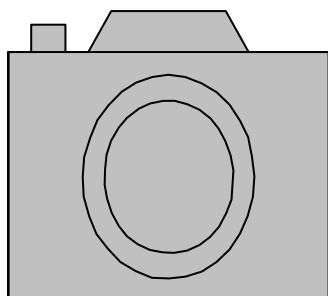
"Nickelodeon Announces Giveaway Program to Encourage Healthy Play" Children's television network Nickelodeon will distribute more than \$1 million from September 2005 to June 2006. The "Let's Just Play" Giveaway offers kids around the United States the opportunity to take action and enter for a chance to improve their school or community program's fitness resources. Maximum Award: \$5000. Eligibility: Kids (6-15 years of age), partnering with teachers and other community-based leaders. Deadline: rolling, until May 31, 2006. [http://www.nick.com/all\\_nick/everything\\_nick/](http://www.nick.com/all_nick/everything_nick/)

#### "Department of Education Forecast of Funding"

This document lists virtually all programs and competitions under which the Department of Education has invited or expects to invite applications for new awards for FY 2005 and provides actual or estimated deadline dates for the transmittal of applications under these programs. The lists are in the form of charts -- organized according to the Department's principal program offices -- and includes previously announced programs and competitions, as well as those planned for announcement at a later date.

Note: This document is advisory only and is not an official application notice of the Department of Education. They expect to provide regular updates to this document. <http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/find/edlite-forecast.html>

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#### ***Photo Reminder:***

Please remember to take photos of your accomplishments so we can share them!

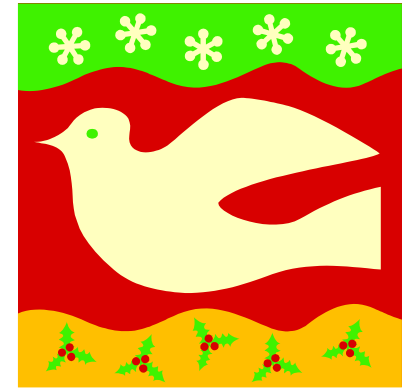
#### **Book Reviews for *Tyranny of Kindness* by Theresa Funiciello and *The End of Poverty* by Jeffrey D. Sachs**

While both of these books deal with poverty and the hope to end it, Jeffrey Sachs' book looks at global poverty and Theresa Funiciello's takes a hard look at poverty, and especially the welfare system, in America.

Sachs reviews economic situations he has personally been involved in to teach us to look at poverty from a money standpoint. His book is filled with graphs and a few good starts for countries that he has worked with.

Funiciello deals only with poverty in America and focuses her work on ending poverty by dismantling the welfare system. She herself was on welfare and has since spent years working on welfare rights, especially for women and children: the people most likely to be on welfare. This book will challenge your views on non-profits and welfare. She leaves us with hope for a guaranteed income program that will end poverty in America.

These books differ in scope, but both look at ways to end poverty. They will change the way you think about poverty.



## *Seasonal Activities*

- **1 Eau Claire - Dickens of a Christmas.** Enjoy dinner with Santa, horse-drawn wagon rides, a bonfire, and the lighting of the Eau Claire Christmas Tree. 205 S Barstow St. Event starts at 5:30PM and ends at 8:30PM. For more information call (715) 839-4914.
- **Dec 1 - Jan 2 Fond du Lac - Lakeside Park Holiday Lights.** Lakeside Park shimmers with thousands of lights, holiday animation, and heart-warming holiday music. Limo tours are available. North Main Street. For more information call (920) 929-2950.
- **2 - 11 Elkhart Lake - Old World Christmas Market.** Traditional German Christkindlesmarket featuring European and regional vendors displaying hand-carved wooden toys, blown glass ornaments and giftware. Dozens of evergreens, delectable European cuisine and jolly old Saint Nicholas. 101 Osthoff Ave. Event starts at 11:00AM and ends at 6:00PM. For more information call 800-876-3399.
- **2 - 4 Ripon - Enchanted Forest.** Dozens of festive, decorated trees plus live seasonal entertainment herald the holiday season. Part of Ripon's Dickens of a Christmas Festival. Harwood Memorial Union. For more information call (920) 748-6764.
- **2 - 4 Sheboygan - Festival of Trees.** View decorated full-size and table-top trees, wreaths, gingerbread houses and stockings. Music and refreshments. Sheboygan Armory. For more information call (920) 457-3371.
- **2 - 4 Spring Green - Country Christmas in Spring Green.** Gallery hopping, horse-drawn carriage rides, caroling, Christmas tree lighting (Fri 6:30pm), breakfast with Santa (Sat 9-11am), fireworks (Sat 6pm), children's movie, holiday luncheon & fashion show, petting zoo, Christmas quilt show & sale and more. For more information call (800) 588-2042.
- **2 - 3 Stoughton - Victorian Holiday Celebration.** This Victorian celebration offers tree lighting, carolers and musicians in costumes, trolley rides, church bazaars, arts and crafts fair, silent fire truck parade at dusk, and a Victorian Ball. Performances of the "Nutcracker Suite" will also be held. Come enjoy the festivities in historic downtown Stoughton. Downtown. For more information call 888-873-7912.
- **3 Kenosha - UW Parkside Arts & Crafts Fair.** Dozens of vendors and hundreds of great gift ideas, just in time for the holidays! UW-Parkside Main Concourse. Event starts at 10:00AM and ends at 4:00PM. For more information call 262-595-2278.
- **3 - 31 Madison - Flower and Model Train Show.** Celebrate Madison's 2006 Sesquicentennial while model trains chug through a setting of Madison's historic buildings created out of natural materials by Olbrich's horticultural staff. Olbrich Botanical Gardens. Event starts at 10:00AM. For more information call (608) 246-4550.
- **3 - 4 Oshkosh - Oshkosh Public Museum Holiday Open House.** Annual event hosted by the Museum Auxiliary featuring special displays, activities, music, decorations and traditional holiday refreshments. Oshkosh Public Museum. For more information call 920-424-4731.
- **3 - 4 Tomah - Christmas Bonanza at This Old Barn.** Come Experience the Barn in its Christmas Finery, experience Christmas Caroling, Horse Drawn Sleigh Rides, Warm Apple Cider, and Santa. This Old Barn. For more information call (608) 374-3330.

- **4 Madison - Holiday Concert.** Enjoy festive holiday music with a concert at the Gardens. Holiday concerts are at 2 p.m. each Sunday from December 4 through 18. Olbrich Botanical Gardens. Event starts at 2:00PM. For more information call (608) 246-4550.
- **9 Portage - Living Windows.** Many downtown merchant windows will play host to the likes of living Yuletide scenes of old Portage. Stroll through the historic torchlit avenues and enjoy the hospitality of the hometown merchants, many of whom will be dressed in attire from Christmas past. Downtown Portage. Event starts at 6:00PM and ends at 8:30PM. For more information call 608-742-5054.
- **10 Baraboo - Victorian Christmas Open House.** Annual Christmas open house will be held to the sights, sounds and smells of Christmas 100 years ago. Sauk County Historical Museum.. For more information call 608-356-1001.
- **10 Portage - Historic Home Tour.** Experience the ambiance of magnificent living days gone by while touring local historic homes in Portage. Citywide. Event starts at 10:00AM and ends at 4:00PM. For more information call 608-742-6242.
- **17 - 18 Milwaukee - BalletCenter's Nutcracker Kingdom of the Sweets.** Join us for The Nutcracker: Kingdom of the Sweets, a family friendly holiday classic directed by Rafael Delgado<sup>ss</sup>. Wisc Luth College Center Arts, 8800 W Bluemound. Event starts at 5:30AM and ends at 6:30AM. For more information call 414-771-1027.
- **31 La Crosse - Fireworks at the Bluff.** Midnight fireworks on Grandad Bluff light up the Mississippi Valley. Folks watch from the bluff, downtown, while ice fishing on the river, cross-country skiing or sledding. Early show for kids at 6pm. Grandad Bluff. Event starts at 6:00PM. For more information call 608-782-2366.



### ***Money Saving Tip of the Month:***

*December may mean the end of the year, but it also marks the beginning of a season of giving. While we may look at giving from a non-materialistic viewpoint, sometimes you may want or feel the need to show your generosity with something tangible. Here are some tips to doing so without breaking the bank:*

<http://www.night.net/christmas/ds-gifts-971030as.html-ssi>

[http://familyfun.go.com/arts-and-crafts/season/specialfeature/holiday\\_gifts\\_ms/](http://familyfun.go.com/arts-and-crafts/season/specialfeature/holiday_gifts_ms/)

[http://southernfood.about.com/cs/homemadegifts/a/gift\\_recipes.htm](http://southernfood.about.com/cs/homemadegifts/a/gift_recipes.htm)

You may also type in “frugal present ideas” or some variation on the theme to find more sites to tickle your imagination.

Another good place to look is second hand shops like Goodwill.



## Service-Learning: What is it?

(Thanks to AmeriCorps for this information)

To begin, it is always best to know what something isn't.

Service-Learning is NOT:

- ❖ An episodic volunteer program
- ❖ An add-on to an existing school curriculum
- ❖ Only for high school or college students
- ❖ One-sided: benefiting only students or only the community

In advocating for service-learning in your communities, you may be met with some confusion or resistance. Some may see it as a hassle to “add-on” a “volunteer” project to existing curriculum. It would be helpful for you to feel able to articulate what makes service-learning its own pedagogy.

So what is service-learning? Even though there are many interpretations of service-learning, as well as different objectives and contexts, we can say that there is a core concept upon which all seem to agree:

*Service-learning combines service objectives with learning objectives with the intent that the activity change both the recipient and the provider of the service. This is accomplished by combining service tasks with structured opportunities that link the task to self-reflection, self-discovery, and the acquisition and comprehension of values, skills, and knowledge content.*

Service-learning can be used in any subject area, so long as it is appropriate to learning goals. When approaching a potential service-learning project, keep in mind the following questions:

- ❖ Does the service link to academic standards and contents?
- ❖ Do the children doing the service play a key role in determining and meeting real community needs (is there “youth voice”)?
- ❖ Is the service reciprocal in nature, benefiting both the community and the service providers by combining a service experience with a learning experience?
- ❖ Is there an intentional reflection component to the project?

For more information about service-learning, visit:

The National Service-Learning Clearinghouse at:  
[www.servicelearning.org/welcome\\_to\\_service-learning/index.php](http://www.servicelearning.org/welcome_to_service-learning/index.php)

Corporation for National Service at:  
[www.nationalservice.org](http://www.nationalservice.org)

“The Big Dummies Guide to Service Learning” at:  
[www.fiu.edu/~time4chg/Library/bigdummy.html](http://www.fiu.edu/~time4chg/Library/bigdummy.html)

DPI Service Learning Background page at:  
[www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dltcl/bbfcsp/slhmpage.html](http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dltcl/bbfcsp/slhmpage.html)

DPI Definition and Philosophy page at:  
[www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dltcl/bbfcsp/sldppage.html](http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dltcl/bbfcsp/sldppage.html)

National Learn and Serve web page  
[www.cns.gov/](http://www.cns.gov/)

Education Central site on service learning at  
<http://edcen.ehhs.cmich.edu/ins/serv/>



**Happy Birthday, on the 18<sup>th</sup>, to Karen!**



## *Interview with Emily and Jennifer*

### *Jennifer's questions for Emily:*

**Q1:** *Where were you born?*

**A1:** San Francisco, California

**Q2:** *If you could live anywhere in the world, where would it be?*

**A2:** I would love to live in the mountains of Peru for awhile. I could learn Spanish and about the culture of the different people who live there. My best friend is doing the Peace Corps there and it looks like such a beautiful country and such an inspiring experience.

**Q3:** *What are you planning on doing after your VISTA position is done?*

**A3:** I am going to move back home to San Francisco and live with a few friends. I want to work for one of the many non-profits there and figure out what I want to go to graduate school for.

**Q4:** *What is the biggest challenge you have encountered as a VISTA this year?*

**A4:** Not speaking Spanish. Most of our bilingual students speak Spanish, and I wish I could communicate with them in their native language.

**Q5:** *If you could have dinner with anyone, living or dead, who would s/he be?*

**A5:** Julia Child, so she could make me a delicious meal and then explain all of the cooking secrets she used to create it!

**Q6:** *What is the one bit of advice you would tell a new VISTA that you wish you had known when you started?*

**A6:** Do a few small projects first so that you get rewarded and gain credibility from your site. Then tackle the larger ones.

**Q7:** *What is your favorite thing to do in your spare time?*

**A7:** I really like to exercise. I love playing soccer, running and dancing.

**Q8:** *If you could have any job in the world, regardless of the salary, what would you do?*

**A8:** President of the United States of America! Then I could fix all the country's problems.

**Q9:** *Tell us something about yourself that most people don't know about you.*

**A9:** I am really goofy. I laugh at pretty much everything, unless it's offensive.

**Q10:** *And finally, one from Oprah...Tell us something you know for sure.*

**A10:** We ALL make mistakes!

### *Emily's questions for Jennifer:*

**Q1:** *What is your favorite thing to eat?*

**A1:** My sister and I order Chinese take-out a few times a month. We get to catch up with each other and have really great conversations. We always order Moo Goo Gai Pan and Crab meat Ragoons with lots of sweet and sour sauce. That is my favorite thing to eat.

**Q2:** *What do you plan on doing after your year of service is up?*

**A2:** I would love to do another year as a VISTA. This is my site's last year, but there are many schools in Green Bay that would benefit from having a VISTA. I would love to go to another school, but if not, I will continue to volunteer and catch up on things that I have let go while I've been working.

**Q3:** *What is your favorite movie and why?*

**A3:** One of my favorite movies is *Riding in Cars with Boys*. I guess because it shows how possible it is to change a bad situation as long as you work hard and follow your heart.

**Q4:** *What is your favorite thing to do on the weekends?*

**A4:** Hang out with my kids-go to the movies, shopping, or playing board games. I also like to catch up on housework. I hadn't worked outside the house for twelve years, so I am not very good at getting much done during the week.

**Q5:** *What has been the most rewarding project that you have worked on so far as a VISTA?*

**A5:** There was a VISTA at my site for years before me, so I am working on sustainability with her projects. But, we held our annual Costume Ball and we had 371 students and families attend. That is a huge number compared to other years. So I was very happy to see how welcome our families feel coming to school events.

**Q6:** *What has been the most surprising thing that has happened to you as a VISTA so far?*

**A6:** That is a hard one; I guess I'm most surprised at the lack of knowledge about AmeriCorps and VISTAs in general. We all really need to work on increasing awareness of who and what we are!

**Q7:** *What is one thing you have learned since becoming a VISTA?*

**A7:** I have learned that principals are REALLY busy people (at least the good ones), and that people will help if you just ask!

**Q8:** *Where was the most interesting place you have ever traveled to?*

**A8:** I have been to England to visit a friend. We didn't do much sight seeing while I was there, but it was interesting to be in a different country.

**Q9:** *What is your favorite book and why?*

**A9:** I don't really have a favorite book, but I have a favorite type of book. I love cookbooks! I could read them all day. I'm not a great cook, but it is something I definitely look forward to pursuing when my kids get older and I have more time.

**Q10:** *What is one of your favorite childhood memories?*

**A10:** When I was in about the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, my mom planned a huge carnival in our back yard to benefit Muscular Dystrophy. The newspaper, television news, and a few local celebrities came. We had about ten different games and a haunted house in our basement. We spent months calling for donations and setting everything up. It was SOOO much fun!

### Recipe of the Month

Spritz cookies:

1 c. butter  
2/3 sugar  
3 egg yolks  
1 tsp. vanilla or almond extract  
2 ½ c. flour

Mix together and shape with a cookie press! You know with those ingredients that that is going to be one good cookie. And so simple too.  
Trust me, they are really tasty. My family makes them every year.

*If you have a family recipe that you would like to share with the group, please send it to Megan at [Megan.O'connell@dpi.state.wi.us](mailto:Megan.O'connell@dpi.state.wi.us). You may specify what month you would like it to appear.*

### Action Team Facts

In an effort to advance the Partnership Action Team process, this monthly feature will answer frequently-asked questions about starting and growing a successful Action Team. In November, we covered some common questions VISTAs might have about holding a successful first meeting of the Action Team. This month we explore how the Action Team can gather information and ideas from families as the team seeks to identify priorities for improving partnerships. What questions about the Action Team do you have? Call or e-mail **Ruth Anne Landsverk**, partnerships coordinator at DPI ([ruthanne.landsverk@dpi.state.wi.us/608-266-9757](mailto:ruthanne.landsverk@dpi.state.wi.us/608-266-9757)).

#### **Q. How can Action Teams gather information from families to improve partnerships?**

**A.** Once your Action Team is formed, it's important to begin gathering information to assess what partnership practices are working well in your school and what areas need attention. Here are some ways that Wisconsin partnership schools use to collect the views, comments, and experiences of families, as well as of school staff and community members:

- Written surveys
- Telephone surveys
- On-line surveys
- Parent forums
- E-mails and school websites
- Family and community town suppers
- Suggestion boxes placed at school entrances
- Panels with parents and teachers
- Breakfasts or lunches with the principal
- Focus groups
- Home visits
- Home-school folders or journals

The effectiveness of each information-gathering strategy depends on the creativity of its planners. Wisconsin schools have used the following strategies to get meaningful feedback from families "where they are:"

- Ask student volunteers to grab a clipboard and survey families attending your next school open house.
- Make survey administration and tabulation part of a social studies or math class project.
- Ask teachers to conduct a short survey of families as part of parent-teacher conferences.
- One district offers a stipend to teachers willing to conduct an end-of-year survey to families in their homes early in the summer. The survey asks parents how they felt about their child's learning during the year and how the school and district can better meet their needs next year.
- Publicize the names and numbers of teachers and what hours they are able to take families' phone calls.
- Encourage parents to e-mail staff any time with questions, comments, or concerns.
- School board members in one smaller community take turns staffing a desk at the local public library each month to answer community members' questions and listen to their views.

Be sure to publish the results of surveys and information-gathering efforts. Respondents need to know that their comments and suggestions were noticed and listened to. Look for the sample survey, "Are We Family-Friendly?" and many more ideas in DPI's on-line Action Team booklet at <http://www.dpi.wi.gov/fscp/bbhghlts.html>.